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52. (New) A nucleic acid according to claim 49, further comprising a transcriptional regulatory sequence operably linked to said nucleotide sequence.

53. (New) An expression vector, capable of replicating in at least one of a prokaryotic cell or a eukaryotic cell, comprising the nucleic acid of claim 51.

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54. (New) A host cell transfected with the expression vector of claim 51.

55. (New) A transgenic animal having a transgene of the nucleic acid of claim 49 incorporated in cells thereof.

56. (New) An isolated polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No. 17 or a fragment thereof which binds *ptc*.

57. (New) The polypeptide of claim 56, wherein the fragment includes at least 25 contiguous amino acids of SEQ ID No. 17.

58. (New) The polypeptide of claim 56, wherein the fragment is an N-terminal fragment having a molecular weight of about 19 kD.

59. (New) A pharmaceutical preparation comprising the polypeptide of claim 56 and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

60. (New) An antibody immunoreactive with a polypeptide of claim 56.

61. (New) A method for determining the presence or absence of a *hedgehog* polypeptide including an amino acid sequence of SEQ ID No. 17 in a sample of bodily fluid,

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